

# New Mission News

COMFORTING THE AFFLICTED AND AFFLICTING THE COMFORTABLE SINCE 1980 • SEPTEMBER 1997



Barbara Bolts

## Reconstitution for Mission High, is it going to get going?

*Program to improve standards is off to a sputtering start, classes begin but hiring still continuing*

by Brian Doohan

Mission High School opened Wednesday, August 27 amid the chaos of Reconstitution, a radical therapy for schools designated as low performing that involves massive staff reassignment to other facilities and a consequent infusion of "new blood" into those places of learning considered academically anemic.

New teachers and administrators were wandering the halls, desperately pulling little slips from pockets and purses, checking the numbers of classrooms and asking directions. Many flashed wan smiles, trying to fit in, running about and craning their necks, seemingly asking "Who am I? What is this? What am I doing here?"

According to Superintendent Waldemar (Bill) Rojas, Reconstitution is the end product of the distillation of a 1982 Consent Decree, leavened by innumerable vaguely Maoist-sounding protocols, such as the Seven Components, the Eleven Philosophical Tenets and the Seventeen Indicators. Teachers have been retained or "vacated", schoolspeak for "pink-slipped", and newcomers were hired on the basis of whether "they believed in and were committed to the Plan and the philosophical tenets."

Provisions of the Consent Decree were used to justify the administrative turnover last year, wherein Principal Lupe Arabolos and her staff were axed and Ted Alfaro was brought in from Sacramento to oversee Mission High.

This year, it was the teachers' turn to be chucked out in the name of Reconstitution.

Rudi Faltes, who along with San Francisco United Educators (SFUE) President Kent Mitchell negotiated the teachers' interests at Mission, restated his opposition to the concept of Reconstitution, but said: "Our job as the union was to make this work in a rational way."

According to Faltes, all of the reconned teachers were to have been offered first rights to open positions, but "a lot of placement scrambling" did occur. "There was an attempt to place people in desirable circumstances," Faltes told the News.

The ongoing chaos makes assessment of the turnover difficult. Principal Alfaro and his new staff did not reply to News inquiries but Superintendent Rojas did. And some of those who were sent packing have not gone quietly into the night, either.

"I am outraged at the lack of acknowledgment of our years of loyal, dedicated services to the students of San Francisco from an inexperienced principal, the Superintendent of Schools or the Board of Education," said Carroll Covey. Covey, a teacher with thirty-four years' experience

Continued on Page 5

## Fire was a disaster waiting to happen

*City was warned of crackhouse blaze that left seventeen in adjacent building homeless*

By Carolyn Abate

Weeks before 475 South Van Ness burned up in a three-alarm fire, city officials were warned that the abandoned apartment house was a disaster waiting to happen. The building, near the corner of 16th and South Van Ness, was gutted by a previous fire on June 26, 1996. More than a year later it had become a rat's nest of drug users and dealers.

Ethel Newlin, facilitator of the 16th and Mission Community Public Safety Mini Task Force, voiced her concerns to the Mission Police department at a community meeting in July and in a letter dated August 4, 1997, sent to the District Attorney's Office and the fire department. "We told them the building needed to be secured... it was squatted... used as a shooting gallery, that there could be another fire."

By way of response, she received a letter from Fire Marshall Aaron C. Stevenson of the Fire Prevention Bureau, informing Newlin an inspection of the property took place on August 21 and "as a result of this inspection, 'the complaint [Newlin's] was referred to an appropriate agency, having jurisdiction, for further action."

Unfortunately, the fire prevention inspection Stevenson refers to occurred two weeks after a fire consumed 475 South Van Ness.

On August 8, Newlin's prediction had come true. A fire started in the building and spread to a three-flat complex next door, causing more than \$130,000 in property damages and leaving 17 people displaced. Those left homeless include families and two people who were residents there for over twenty years. "I feel upset, depressed," said Rafael Larios. Larios, 73,

is disabled and lived at his apartment — now fire gutted — for 23 years. "I lost furniture, clothes, personal things that are valuable to me."

The fire was deliberately set, a result of "transient activity," according to arson investigator Lt. George Alboff. This does not surprise those living or working near

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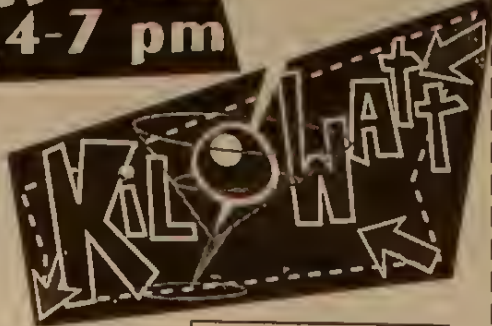


The crackhouse at 475 South Van Ness is flanked by the flats that had to be evacuated (on the left) and Albero Brothers Jeep owners of the burned out property (on the right). Photo by Arthur Hudson

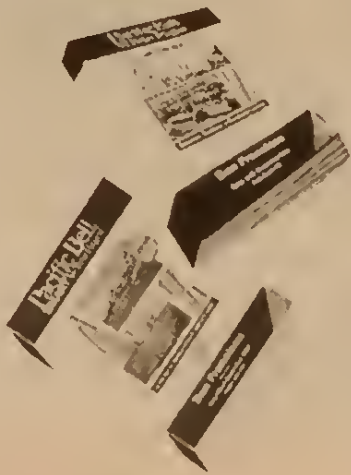
# CYCLISTS' CRITICAL MASS MELLOWS

SEE  
PAGE 9



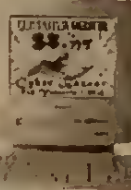
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# Celebrate the Americas at the 24th St. Fair

Mission's end of summer festival will be held on Sunday, September 14



by Claudia L. DeCost

The Mission District's own street fair is coming this month. If you enjoy the Mission on an every day basis, strolling on a sunny day, browsing the many one-of-a-kind neighborhood shops, trying to decide between the City's most diverse group of eateries, and, of course, people watching, the 24th Street Fair/Festival de las Americas will be calling you.

This street fair originated as a sort of community outreach effort by local merchants who wanted to foster a neighborhood feeling and to promote their businesses. It has grown to include, along with local displays, arts and crafts and foods from throughout the city and the area. This is still very much a family-oriented, Mission District event which provides lots of entertainment as well as a Children's Area and a Family and Youth Health and Education Block.

There were complaints in the past about problems caused by the sale of alcohol, so this year no liquor or beer will be available (or allowed by law) on the street. The Children's Area will feature a stage (there will be a bilingual puppet show), rides, arts and craft making, and give aways. This area was designed with the parent and child in mind - neither adults without children nor young children without adults can be facilitated.

The Family and Youth Health and Education Block will have HIV testing along with lots of information on local social services available for families and individuals.

If browsing the wares of local and not-so-local artisans isn't enough to bring you out, perhaps one of the three stages will offer something for you.

The Merchants Association will preside over the stage at Bryant Street with an interesting line-up focusing on Rock en Espanol, including Los Illegals from East L.A., Dermis Tatu from Caracas, Venezuela, and local bands including La Muda, Lodo Y Asfalto, and La Limpia.

The stage at Folsom Street, presided over by KIQ1, features an impressive list

of guests: Los Dinos, Carmen Jara, Tentacion, Dinastia Nortena, and Gerardito Fernandez (if you like Pedro, you love his brother Gerardito!). And KZSF is sponsoring the stage at Harrison Street; their equally impressive guests include Gerry Galante, Corrine, Grupo Fiesta, Sonida Chilango Bahia Tropical Y Su Ballet Blanco Y Negro, Sonora USA, Tony Nieto, DJ Tonio, and a surprise headliner.

The Fair has also grown in a political sense. Because a number of Latin American countries gained their independence in the month of September, many people began to associate the fair with an independence celebration. This has led to the additional name for the Fair of Festival de las Americas. Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Chile all gained independence from their various oppressors during the month of September. These countries will be represented at the Fair with food and product booths and immigrants ready to share their knowledge. Some organizers of the Fair see it as a means of increasing local economic independence. [The Merchants Association is sponsoring a magazine which will focus on the connections, both economic and cultural, between the Mission District and Latin America. This magazine is due out in September.] The Merchants Association is also sponsoring a Business Forum on September 5 to address economic and legal issues facing local merchants.

A VIP kick-off to the month's events will be held on September 5 at the Bay View Bank Building. The highlight of the evening will be the fourth annual awards reception honoring local community activists. This event is sponsored by the Northeast Mission Association, the Mission Economic Development Association, the 16th Street Neighborhood Association, the SF Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Mission Street Merchants Association, and the 24th Street Merchants Association.

The 24th Street Fair takes place September 14 from 11am to 6pm on 24th Street from Mission to Potrero Streets. Admission and entertainment for the whole family is free. Call 642-2772 for more information.

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# Mission Broadsider



**Andy Solow**

## Why are the missing cops still missing?

In 1994, the San Francisco Charter was amended by popular vote to require the City to staff the Police Department with not less than 1,971 full duty sworn officers by not later than June 30, 1995. But, as of August 8, 1997, the SF Police Department was more than 140 full duty sworn officers short of compliance with the 1994 voter mandate.

Back in May, when I asked Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. if the City was going to comply with Prop. D and hire some more cops, Mayor Brown said, "The City will fully staff the Police Department, period!"

Since then, I've sent three separate letters to the mayor, the SF Board of Supervisors, the SF Police Commission, and Police Chief Fred Lau, notifying them that the City has a duty to comply with its own Charter and fully staff the police department. I demanded that the City make a plan to fully staff the police department by some specific date and demanded a written response. But with the notable exception of several letters back and forth between Supervisor Jose Medina, Chief Lau and the Police Commission, all echoing similar concerns, the substantive answer that I got was "Trust me."

### Trust Me

On August 6, 1997, I spoke to the SF Police Commission about full staffing of the Police department. I asked them why they had ignored three separate notices of violation and demands for compliance by a specific date, and reminded them that the Department is currently 140 full duty sworn policemen short of the Charter mandated minimum. I also reminded the Commissioners that their recent so-called report to the Board of Supervisors was not sufficient and did not meet the requirement of the [San Francisco] Charter, because it was only a list of the positions that could be civilianized, not a report on the Department's progress in civilianizing those positions, as the Charter requires. Then, I asked the Commissioners when I might expect to receive a written response and what the Commission is going to do to assure that the City meets the minimally mandated police staffing level by some date certain.

Commissioner President, Pat Norman blamed the problem on the board of supervisors. Norman said that "the money is the issue. We [the commissioners] have talked to the board of supervisors. We have said that we need to have that money. We have actually included the positions in the [SFPD 1997-1998 proposed] budget. The board of supervisors, who makes the decisions on the budgets, has chosen not to fill

those positions... and in fact, has cut on several occasions those specific positions.... I know that they [the SF Board of Supervisors] are fully aware of the 1994 vote [Prop D] as we are, and I think that it does come down to where we're gonna get the money to be able to fill those positions.... We have talked to the board of supervisors and the response has been 'We don't have the money to give you that now for that purpose'.... The priorities for the City at this point are how to deal with the welfare issues that have recently come up.... When it comes to finding funds to support civilian positions, when monies are needed to support people who are no longer eligible for some of the Federal support programs, the priorities begin to be people who are in need for food and clothing and housing."

I responded, "...So you've done your duty.... You [the commission] notified the board of supervisors that there was a problem and you asked for sufficient funds to solve the problem. The mayor and the board of supervisors were derelict in their duty. They did not give you the money. Therefore, the [Police] Department is not properly staffed...."

President Norman said: ".... Our priorities are also that people who are without food and clothing and at this point, we would not be willing to take on a position that at all costs, we have to have those civilian positions filled at the expense of peoples' quality of lives, not only quality of life but their ability to live. So, we will continue to work to have those civilian positions filled, and as soon as it can happen, it will. We are as committed as you are Mr. Solow. Trust me."

### The Numbers Game

On August 6, 1997, I also spoke with Chief Fred Lau and Deputy Chief Richard Holder. Both Lau and Holder admitted that the Department is not up to full staffing. Chief Lau also stated that only three Police Academy classes were funded in the 1997-1998 city budget and the first of those three academy classes, already in progress, has only twenty-two students remaining in it. Lau agreed that this scenario should yield roughly one hundred full-duty, sworn officers by January 1, 1999.

According to Deputy Chief Holder and SFPD personnel department head Lt. Alan

Mould, as of August 7, 1997, the San Francisco Police Department had a total of 2,008 sworn officers on staff, of whom 49 were on permanent light duty, 71 were on temporary light duty and 57 were on disability. This means that as of August 7, 1997, there were only 1,831 full duty sworn officers in the San Francisco Police Department, 140 less than the City Charter requires. 1,831 current full duty sworn officers plus 100 1997-98 recruits, minus the 70 retired/disabled officers expected for 1997-98 equals 1,861 full duty sworn officers as of July 1, 1998, 110 less than the Charter requires.

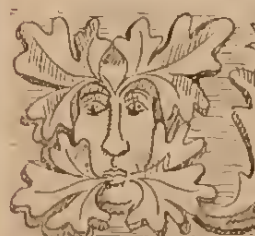
### The Plan! The Plan!

A few days later, in response to an inquiry from me regarding the City's failure to comply with its own Charter, Mayor Brown's Press Secretary, Candace Bender, claimed that the police department is fully funded and that it will be up to full staffing by the end of 1997. Bender further claimed that she had listened to the official tape of my comments from the August 6, 1997 police commission meeting and that in her opinion, Commissioner Norman's responses to my questions were not an admission of the City's unwillingness to fully staff the police department.

When I called Chief Lau for clarification, Lau claimed that I had misunderstood the City's position and stated that there is, in fact, adequate funding in the 1997-1998 SF Police Department budget to meet the minimally mandated Police staffing level. According to Lau, the problem is that there are currently 109 unfilled Police Inspector positions that are funded, but that there is no money for any additional patrol officers. Lau further stated that these Inspector positions would be filled in the near future from Patrol and once they are, the resulting Patrol division surplus could then be used to add additional Police Academy classes and hire additional Patrol Officers. But, Lau could not give me a timetable for when the Department would be in compliance with the Charter mandated minimum police staffing level. More next month.



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## Fire

Continued from Page One

the burned-out building. "There was an abandoned car in the back of the house, and sometimes we would see people using the side view mirror to shoot up in their neck," said Annette Muller, who lived next door. Two other neighbors say they witnessed a dead body being removed from the building. Police records show only four reports filed this year regarding the property, including two for trespassing. No deaths are indicated. But New Mission News learned from reliable sources that the body of a forty year-old white male was found at the abandoned building on July 14. He reportedly died of a drug overdose.

Newlin blames the fire on a lack of communication: "I see it as a breakdown of the code enforcement agency." Critical code enforcement problems are often referred to a citywide task force that monitors buildings considered a public nuisance. Depending on the violation — health, housing, fire or criminal — the agency then targets the property owner, according to Karen Carrera, deputy city attorney in charge of the task force for the Mission. Her agency brings civil charges against property owners who consistently fail to comply with safety procedures. In the case of 475 South Van Ness, police say the structure was monitored.

"When the building (first) became a problem, the previous owners were advised to secure the building. They put up padlocks, and boarded the windows," said Sgt. Pablo Ossio. When the Albera Brothers (the Jeep dealership next door) bought the property after the first fire, Ossio said they continued to make efforts to secure the building. "If somebody complained we would go in, but I don't think there is anything people could have done short of having someone there 24-hours a day," he said. Officer Miguel Granados, who has been on code enforcement for three months, said he has received only one complaint regarding the building and that it was from Newlin. "I went out, saw a fence, saw the building was boarded. At the time, there wasn't anyone in the building."

The morning of the August 8 fire, Newlin received a call from a code enforcement investigator, telling her Albera Brothers were warned they would be fined if the building wasn't secured. But when they told investigators it was going to be demolished, the fine was postponed.

Clara Quesada, who lived next door to 475 South Van Ness for four months, says she worried about her safety the entire time. "I had a feeling something bad would happen; I would wake up at night worried." She lost a bed, sofa, clothes, crystal and jewelry in the fire. Currently Quesada is staying with her son and has yet to find a new place she can afford. She blames Albera Brothers for her losses, "I wish they would have destroyed the building." Both she and Larios have sought an attorney.

Albera Brothers say they are "just as frustrated as the people who lost their home," but blaming the jeep dealership is wrong, said owner Jim Albera. They bought the property with intent to demolish it and build a parking lot. Albera said they waited for nine months to get approval from the planning department. During the interim, he feels the dealership did everything to keep the building secure from drug users. "I put boards up and they would come and tear them out. Guys would come out with crowbars," he recalled. When asked why he didn't put up a fence, he says it would not have deterred those wanting to enter the vacant building.



*Bike thieves and others had easy entry to 475 South Van Ness before the fire. Graffiti on the door expresses somebody's love of crack Phata by Arthur Hudson*

"I put up a fence after the fire. You know what they did? They climbed over it and pulled off the boards. If you want to blame somebody, blame the City, blame the planning department."

According to the planning department records, the Albera Brothers application was approved in six weeks. "An application to demolish an existing building must be approved by the city's Planning Department and building inspection," said Carla Johnson of the Building Department. Her files show that the Planning Department received the Albera Brothers application on July 8 and approved it on July 17. "We (the building inspectors) received the permit on July 17 and approved on August 14." Johnson said her records do not show a "rejected application" but added "that doesn't mean they [Albera Brothers] weren't working on it."

On August 24, the day the building was demolished, Larios sat in a small residential hotel room in the Mission. He plans on staying there until October. "If they would have torn down the building, none of this would have happened." He looked around his cramped room, strewn with clothes and wondered out loud, "Who is going to take the blame?"

## NEW MISSION NEWS

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## Mission High

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who has also served as coach and former Director of Athletics, told the News that she, like an estimated three-quarters of the Mission High faculty, underwent only a brief interview regarding being rehired (very brief, other rehired faculty concur). On July 31, Covey was notified of her dismissal via a form letter from principal Alfaro, which read in its entirety:

"I regret to inform you that you have not been selected to return to Mission High School. This information has been forwarded to the Human Resources Dept. For further information contact the Human Resources Office." Less date and signature, her roach ticket contained exactly 35 words. If one includes the coming term, she apparently merited one word for every year of service.

Through August, Covey scrambled for a position within the SFUSD archipelago. An appointment to Balboa was tendered, then rescinded, and then a downgrading from high to middle school suggested. At press time, Covey had been rehired at Mission High into an athletic program that had yet to hire a director or fill other essential positions.

Mission High test scores haven't been impressive of late, but Alfaro's harvest of heads is noteworthy. One popular teacher who will not be returning is Katherine Swan. Her journalism class published the West Wing newspaper, which gained honors and respect from national student journalism councils, and resentment from some of the administrators it criticized.

Responding to a News inquiry on the student newspaper and athletic department, Rojas vowed that "there will be no impact on present extracurricular activities," and also promised that there would be new clubs and activities as soon as the new staff could plan them.

The Superintendent also stated that "parent involvement is incorporated into the new educational plan for Mission High". It was, in fact, cited as one of the Philosophical Tenets. One of the criticisms of some "vacated" teachers has been that independent parents' groups have been discouraged; as a result, participation in the official Parents' Center has been negligible.

Parents might have had cause to wonder at the chaos over the last two weeks, as Rojas and Alfaro scrambled to fill the positions of those vacated earlier in the summer. In fact, many of the terminated teach-

ers report having been asked to reapply. Many have not done so, either because they have found other positions or they would no longer feel comfortable working at Mission High.

Asked whether there was a departmental perception of rehired teachers as "damaged goods", Faltes allowed that this might be possible, although "some of our best teachers have been reconstituted through the years."

Steve Shapiro of SFUE said that union membership is voluntary, although a service fee has to be paid by non-union hires. He also said that teachers have to have "some kind" of credentials, "but they can get emergency credentialing from the California State Department of Education."

Neither the union nor Rojas could say how many of Mission High's new teachers have either experience or credentials. "Human resources staff are not able to answer these questions at this time," the Superintendent replied. "In about two weeks, all the data will be complete and they will then be able to respond to your request in an accurate manner."

Rojas and Faltes did agree that "approximately sixty percent of last year's Mission staff will be back. Typical high school [teacher] turnover is about ten percent." But as late as Friday, August 22, administrators were still interviewing at Mission High.

If one were to ask whether the School District knew what it was doing, the easy answer might be no. But there is another possible motivation for Reconstitution and why the SFUSD keeps shaking up Mission High, despite clear evidence that the instability, in and of itself, is a component of declining test scores and a rising dropout rate. Given the hostility to bilingual education at the state and federal level, it may be that the less experienced bilingual teachers are being hurried into Mission and other schools, ahead of pro-English/anti-Spanish legislation.

Unfortunately, Mission High students seem to be getting the impression that they are only pawns in an ongoing struggle of big power-blocs. It's a shame but it's also a part of growing up. Faltes, who attended Mission High and wrote for the student newspaper there in 1963, expressed hope that Mission High students will still have a West Wing Newspaper, or something like it, to report on what is being done to them and analyze the causes. This is a sentiment most reasonable people would share.

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# September's tenant convention is crucial

## IMPACT OF HOUSING STRATEGY SESSION COULD BE FELT FOR YEARS

by Brian Doohan

The August fires that dumped nearly three hundred residents of the Delta and Baldwin hotels, plus more from the South of Market senior projects on 4th and Clementina, have created an increasing sense of desperation at the lowest end of San Francisco's housing market, as tenants prepare to hold a citywide convention on Saturday, September 13 at Mission High School.

During August, several neighborhood conventions were held to develop a focus for September, including two in the Mission that were inexplicably scheduled at the same time on Saturday, August 16.

Fortunately, some convention organizers comprehend these subtleties, and so the 1997 Convention stands a reasonable chance of avoiding the appearance of a pre-programmed publicity forum for elites and self-serving politicians.

### A tale of two conventions

The Mission conventions were pitched to the two lowest circles of San Francisco's housing hell above the street, itself. The largest landlord and real estate interests, often living in the burbs, traditionally seek alliances with those on the next lowest circle, homeowners.

Below them are employed professionals, who can afford median rents of \$1,000 a month for studios or \$1,600 for two bedroom apartments. Next come the circle of tenants who gathered in the Centro del Pueblo, hanging on at below-market rates due to rent control, and frequently in small buildings subject to owner-move-in assault. Two blocks east, at the Redstone Building, those who can afford only single residence occupancy (SRO) hotels (and shell out \$400 and up for the honor) congregated.

The Centro del Pueblo convention attracted a predominantly Spanish-speaking contingent, many of whom have had to turn to the St. Peter's Housing Committee which, according to meeting facilitator and current director of St. Peter's, Gloria Lopez, provides emergency counseling to 6,000 families yearly.

### The OMI Monster

Because many of these tenants live in small buildings, the abuse of owner-move-in evictions (OMI's) dominated the convention, as it has done in several other neighborhoods away from Downtown. "Of all evictions in San Francisco, OMI's have increased most rapidly over the past six months," says Lopez. "Unfortunately, we believe that a substantial proportion of OMI's are done in bad faith to take advantage of a highly profitable rental market, and that the units are not subsequently occupied by the owner or relatives."

OMI's became a 1996 election issue when appointed Supervisor Michael Yaki proposed stronger controls. Intentionally or not, the legislation provoked a flood of landlord cash to Yaki, who then helped defeat his own reforms, using the money to squeak back into office.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, contempt was expressed for enforcing even the weak OMI provisions now mandated by law. One tenant, "Betty", stated that she had been forced to move fourteen times in 44 years of living in San Francisco. Another dismissed the Rent Board, saying "They're weak, they don't help you.... They get paid and then, don't help." Lopez cited an additional handicap facing Latino tenants impacted

by OMI's: "Most Spanish speaking tenants who receive legal papers in English are afraid and just say 'I'm out of here!'"

Not surprisingly, the Centro del Pueblo contingent overwhelmingly supported reforming OMI through a ballot measure and opposing any weaker legislation thrown up by Supervisors. And it is this apparent OMI juggernaut that worried many of the mainly English-speaking, African-American tenants of residential hotels, who have nothing to gain from OMI reform because they no longer have apartments to lose.

### Voices from "Hotel Hell"

In the netherworld of the SRO's, there are already plenty of laws but these are usually ignored by hotel management, and complaints to city agencies are treated with contempt and disrespect. Corrupt hotel operators no longer even seem to feel the obligation to hide the crudity of their scams. One participant noted the prevalence of hotel managers calling police to haul off tenants with one-week city vouchers for housing by invoking imaginary charges after a night or two, enabling the hotelier to re-rent the room at daily rates to prostitutes or drug dealers.

Code enforcement, despite the enactment of a task force, remains bottled up, mostly in the City Attorney's Office. It is also illegal for SRO's to evict tenants for the purpose of circumventing the minimal protections allowed a tenant after 32 days. Some hotels, however, have so little respect for enforcement that they compel tenants to sign forms stating that they consent to eviction after 28 or even 21 days.

If there is hope for the September convention, perhaps it will come if the apartment tenants vote to make enforcement of housing laws, like OMI's, a priority for 1997-98.

### Politics, politics and more politics

One immediate opportunity for influence has already been fumbled. The candidate filing deadline passed without an electoral challenger to city attorney Louise Renne, who has been widely excoriated as incompetent but is also perceived to be politically invulnerable.

Redstone tenants expressed fear and loathing that September's convention will be crashed by politicians, especially the

newest Brown appointment, Gavin Newsom, who being young and influenced by Joe Pesci movies, has revived the panacea of making slumlords spend a night in their own hovels.

Thus, one could predict the most likely outcomes for the San Francisco Tenants Convention: support for an OMI initiative in November, 1998 and some resolution on enforcement, which probably will result in several demonstrations, bad-building tours, perhaps some form of provocation to encourage District Attorney Terence Hallinan to act where City Attorney Renne fails to do so.

But maybe not!

The first of two wild cards is the re-institution of District Elections in 2000, by which time six or seven Supes may be Brown appointees. Renter voting drives have come and gone, but St. Peter's, at least, is cognizant of the prospect of washing out all the Brownies and replacing them with genuine tenant advocates.

The second wild card is that the true impact of the fiery displacement of hundreds of low-income seniors will hit in mid-September, when the operators of the scuzzy hotels they've been packed into attempt to pitch them out into the gutter to escape rent control coverage. This is a political nightmare that will at least remove "bandit bicycles" from Mayor Brown's attention. Some relief from this unpleasant development was afforded by members of the Mission SRO Collaborative, who successfully negotiated long term leases at the Thor Hotel for ten people displaced by the fires.

There is, in this situation, a window available for real action, such as opening up Treasure Island for housing, as some tenant activists favor or perhaps, even the Presidio. Without a doubt, this convention may have implications for the next few years that could be played out long after the fires of August are forgotten.

For more information on the Tenant Convention call 282-6622

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# Horizons clouded by labor organizing efforts

*Union makes gains but organizer faces uphill fight for reinstatement in her job*

By Carolyn Abate

Last month, on a typically warm, Mission summer day, employees of Horizons Unlimited, a drug counseling and youth services nonprofit organization, took to the streets with picket signs in hand. They were not on the way to Sacramento, however, but to a march that went no further than the pavement around the building where they worked. For this occasion, they were marching on their own behalf, as employees of the nonprofit youth agency.

According to Horizons workers, walking the picket line for an hour represents nine months of struggle to realize a new labor contract. In December of 1996, the nonprofit voted to join the Service Employees Union Local 790. The principle issues at stake are improved medical benefits, establishing policy and procedure, and an increase in wages. "We are attempting to have more dialogue, to have an input on where the program is going," said Ernest Lira, a member of Horizons' employee bargaining committee.

Since ratifying the union, workers have seen some improvement of conditions but controversy persists. A new executive director was brought in but two members of the bargaining committee have been fired since her arrival. In July, Manuel Siliesar was discharged for excessive tardiness, along with Dina Pellegrini, for not following policy and procedure.

Although these actions have left a bad taste at Horizons, there is evidence that support from the union is proving to be worth the risks taken to become members. Siliesar got his job back through union negotiations and the process of talks in favor of Pellegrini's case for reinstatement are underway. Lira, who has been with the nonprofit for more than ten years, said that these avenues for arbitration and for resolution of other work related problems were not possible prior to organizing. "Things started changing after two months, when we finally got a procedures manual. Now, there are guidelines," he affirmed.

He credited Pellegrini for getting the manual in place, but she believes her candid approach got her fired, that her difficulties started with the old executive director who "did not like the union; she took it

personally." Lira recalled that when the new executive director, Josefina Vasquez, assumed management of the agency, the employees felt there was hope, but two months later, Pellegrini was out of a job.

In a memo to Pellegrini, Vasquez stated that the nonprofit's board advised her to fire the counselor for not following office policy. "We feel Dina was fired for union activity," stated Daz Lamparas, her union representative. Pellegrini said that during negotiations, numerous inconsistencies surfaced regarding the decision by Vasquez to fire her. She noted that at one point, after reading the memo, a board member turned to her and said, "Dina, we just want you to know that we did not advise her to fire you."

Vasquez declined to comment on Pellegrini's case but expressed the importance of creating "a climate where we can work together." She termed the negotiations "a positive change" and stressed that the goal of greatest import to her is for the nonprofit to realize its service mission.

The union has filed an unfair labor practice with the National Labor Relations Board, although Lamparas acknowledges that Vasquez was hired during "hostile" times, and Pellegrini agrees that problems existed long before Vasquez entered the picture. "I had a feeling that I would be fired..." she says. "I demand answers. I demand policy and procedure."

Presently, changes that workers are seeking to include in the new contract are a dollar increase in pay, sick leave, more vacation time, better health insurance and a proper grievance procedure. Vasquez said that, from her personal point of view, Horizons Unlimited employees are not paid comparable wages: "I feel most of the workers are paid below the average," she agreed. Through fundraising, Vasquez hopes to increase salary levels.

Another critical issue currently under negotiation is the extent of health benefits coverage. When the agency switched from Kaiser to Blue Cross of California, Pellegrini said that employees had agreed to the change of insurance carriers because they were under the impression that health care for spouses would be included. A few weeks later, a memo was distributed to inform workers that dependents would not be covered under the new plan. Vasquez acknowledged that "on the whole, most were dissatisfied with the [insurance] change."



Demonstrators marched in front of Horizons Unlimited offices.

Another negotiation meeting has been scheduled for September 2. "Right now," said Lamparas, "the pending issues are

wages, health issues, and grievance procedure." Nonetheless, he added, "Dina's case is important for peaceful negotiations."



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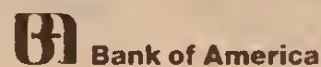
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# Cyclists' mellow Mass still shakes up the city

by Victor Miller

After the whoopla of the previous month, the August 29th Critical Mass was mellow in the extreme and without incident. The large scale cycling event on the last Friday of every month that begins at Justin Herman Plaza and moves down Market to a location selected on the spot, has drawn thousands of participants, introduced a wild card element into local politics and energized an urban environmental movement.

Efforts by city officials and the police to control the July 25 Critical Mass lead to chaos when 5-7,000 riders refused to follow a ridiculously complicated "official route" with 19 changes of direction and took off all over town. The police in a kind of pout, announced that in August they wouldn't facilitate the ride as they had for the past few years.

Anticipating that, left to their own devices, cyclists would create havoc the SFPD day watch for the whole city was put on six hour overtime, helicopters were put in the air and a command post was set up at 850 Bryant. One veteran officer estimated the cost of all this to be \$45,000 an hour.

It was all totally unnecessary.

Following, a loudly dramatized Critical Mass-based play by the SF Mime Troupe, and a vigorously jeered announcement by Captain Dennis Martel reiterating police non-participation, 3-4,000 riders proceeded down Market. Stopping at every red light and for the most part obeying all the traffic laws, the massers made the oft-repeated slogan, "We're not blocking traffic; we are traffic", a reality. The era of two and four wheel street equality was underway.

Some groups took off for the North Beach and the Golden Gate Bridge others cruised SOMA and the Mission making various triumphant noises. About 1500 wound up in Dolores Park for a victory celebration.

By first scaring the bejabbers out of the city's establishment with July's traffic jam from Hell and then showing a capacity for a big numbers, disciplined protest in August, Critical Mass has made bicyclists a force to be reckoned with in city politics. The movers and shakers haven't quite reckoned how they're going to reckon with them yet but there's lots of action.

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's membership surged from 1,050 members on July 1 to 1,500 by mid-August (corresponding to the period of Mayor Brown's critical bashing of bicyclists). A Critical Mass web site that had 60-70 postings a month this spring had 1,500 for August. Various trouble-free mini-masses took place throughout August, including one about a hundred strong, that went effortlessly down Market from Justin Herman Plaza to the Mission.

Regular Critical Mass riders kicked off a free bicycle program by dropping off ten delightfully ugly, yellow bikes in front of city hall and leaving them there for anybody to, ride and then leave for somebody

else. There have been several reports of homeless people riding around in various parts of town on these bikes. Supervisor Gavin Newsom has been working on a similar plan for the city but has been bogged down by the liability issue. He is reportedly negotiating with a Mission District non-profit to operate the program.

Missing in action has been Mayor Brown who after a lot of tough talk early on, appears snakebit by his bicycle battles and has been uncharacteristically quiet.

Also in low profile is Supervisor Michael Yaki, who, Brown selected to fall on the Critical Mass grenade, bungled negotiations with the two wheelers before July's chaos and wound up with egg on his face and blood in his eye for all things bicycular. Yaki is still in charge of the planned alternative transportation summit.

Supervisor Leslie Katz has emerged as the new point person and has appropriately enough come up with a 14 point "Bicycle Transportation Enhancement Plan". It includes provisions for cyclist lockers, sets up a city employee bike fleet, provides bike-parking spaces in public garages and legalizes cycling in bus-only diamond lanes. This is something but not a lot, especially in light of the several hundred pages of detailed recommendations in the I San Francisco Bicycle Plan that the city has endorsed but not implemented.

Critical Mass is the monthly seizure of a portion of San Francisco's traffic corridors which every other day of the month are the absolute domain of the automobile and other motorized traffic and therefore unsafe for alternative forms of travel. It is the safety factor and not a lack of showers or parking places or financial incentives that is a primary concern for most cyclists and the major deterrent for those who would otherwise get on a bike. The necessity of an interconnected series of bike lanes to make biking from one part of San Francisco to the other easy and unriskey should have been made obvious by the death of two cyclists in unrelated incidents last month. But the issue of shared roadways and a realignment of public space is one that most of city government just doesn't get, case in point Director of Parking and Traffic, Bill Maher.

At a Mission District community meeting on August 26, Maher, while articulate on other transportation issues, could not disguise an ill-informed disdain for Critical Mass, "I revolted on the war in Vietnam and Civil Rights, the right to run a stop sign doesn't move me quite as much." Maher was also adamant in his



Critical Mass riders pass memorial to cyclist killed in an accident a few days earlier. Photo by Arthur Hudson.

opposition to the long delayed Valencia Street bike line. "I'm not going to put a bike lane on Valencia. ... The bottom line is shared lanes. I'm not removing any [traffic] lanes." Following this statement Maher called on his nine-year-old daughter, Mary Kate, who accompanied him to the meeting and had her own ideas "I think it's a good idea to have bike lanes, so we don't pollute the air," she said, bringing down the house. Maher was, for once, non-plused.

Parking and Traffic Commissioner Sharon Bretz gave the Director an administrative rap across the knuckles over his Valencia (Mary Kate?) bike lane remarks. "That's not his decision to make; policy is made by the Commission. Mr. Maher is a manager not a policy maker." Bretz said in light of the up again down again controversy over the Central Freeway the Commission would be conducting another study of Valencia street before naying or okaying the bike lane. She expected this to take six months.

Bretz has proposed closing Market Street to automobiles and of all the proposals public officials this is the only one which attempts to reallocate a piece of the streets of San Francisco and addresses the safety issue in a significant way. The proposal has received a cool reception from the rest of city government, (although in private conversations, Mayor Brown has said he's giving the street closure serious consideration). Bretz nonetheless stands by her idea. "The proposal is still very much alive," she said. Bretz points out that previous studies by the City and SPUR endorse a car free downtown.

In fact, when Market Street was redesigned and took on its current form, including Justin Herman Plaza, in the late

60's, the original plans banned both cars and streetcars from the Embarcadero to Octavia Street.

Ninety year-old Mario Ciampi the architect who had the city contract for this Downtown Plan, told the News, this didn't happen because of objections from some businesses. "The downtown merchants, especially the owners of the Emporium, objected to my plan because it eliminated automobiles and street cars, he said. Ciampi did manage to fight off an attempt to make Market an eight-lane street and he continues to argue the environmental merits of his original design. "The idea of closing Market to automobiles is still a very valid one but needs to be integrated into a unified transportation system for the street. That's not being done, the result is confrontations with bicyclists.... The city is getting more and more toxic and unlivable much of this is because of automobiles. Something's going to happen it's just a question of at what price," Ciampi said.

But is something going to happen soon. Before the August Mass, Captain Martel's bull horn enhanced warning roaring over hundreds of catcalls and Bronx Cheers, cautioned cyclists that should things get out of hand they would alienate the Supervisors, the commissioners and "all those people that hold the purse strings of city government." The implication being, an orderly ride would bring about changes. The ride was peaceful, but it's too early to tell if there's going to be a corresponding outpouring of support for alternative transportation issues. The only rapid action out of city government bicyclists have seen to date followed the chaos of July's ride. If the Mellow Mass doesn't get results, people may decide to go with what works. The next Mass, on September 26, will tell the tale.



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Jack Photo by Arthur Hudson

## The Poet of the Streets

By Victor Miller

Of the practicing Beat poets -those that actually give readings in used bookstores, who can be found obnoxiously but eloquently drunk on street corners, that live in cheap hotels and sport a craggy look of unreconstructed defiance (to whatever it is you've got) - Jack Micheline keeps the jazzy faith best.

Last month at Adobe Books with the death of Beatdom's secularly canonized Big Two, Burroughs and Ginsberg still not passed the point of feeling unreal, Micheline celebrated the publication of the largest collection of his work in twenty years, an event which he characterized with his characteristic immodesty as "historic." Who's to say it wasn't; Micheline's work spans over half a century. The new book, "Sixty Seven Poems for Downtrodden Saints," covers the full spectrum from the time the Beats constituted the most vocal segment of unlobotomized America in the 50's to the present when the world still needs a well delivered kick in the ass from those beyond the pale of status and acceptance. The volume is chock full of photos of Micheline's Patchen-esque paintings and photos of himself with (mostly dead) poets and artists associated with beatnick-ery.

Micheline wowed the assembled lumpen-litcratti at Adobe with his accustomed wine soaked and rum dipped poetry, which still burns with an undiminished rage:

There is no nobility in poverty  
There is too much cruelty  
Shameless greed  
Man is forever cunning  
And cold cash leads the pack  
The devil whips our asses  
The devil turns the wheel of the world

and sometimes lapses into a world-weary funk:

In reality I am a fucked up poet  
Who will never come to terms  
with the world  
No matter how beautiful  
the flowers grow  
No matter how the children smile  
No matter how blue is the bluest sky  
The harsh realities of life,  
that life is mostly a put up job  
The genius rain avoids us

They loved it all; even Micheline's harmonica playing which is only pretty good and amazingly even his singing which is...uh... sincere. The old word slinger randomly cursing and kissing people as the mood struck him was very definitely ON.

At sixty seven Jack Micheline remains the quintessential poet of the streets his subject matter remains stinking hotels, racetracks gamblers, bad teeth, evictions, whores and dreamers. His work has varied over the decades but his allegiance to the unsung has not.

Don't expect anyone to  
Understand to blow  
A kiss in a cold night  
A poet can be a shoemaker  
A waitress who never  
Wrote a line  
A poet could be the  
Invisible man

Celebrating the urban condition is a wordy job but somebody's got to do it. So why not the old guy in the slightly ridiculous hat, who won't be bullied and can't shut up, who has the right combination of craft and heart to give words power. Micheline has staked his claim here, since a time before television, if most of his contemporaries have called it quits or had quits called on them, "the old pro chasing the mad dream" looks to have the last spoken word on Beat. ("Nothing that man has done on this earth/ Will remain on this earth/ Nothing but the fire of creation")

"Sixty Seven Poems for Downtrodden Saints" is a bit of literary archeology It consists of work salvaged from more than fifty trunks and suitcases stored in a Page Street locker. Some poems were too water damaged to read others were too illegible for even Micheline to figure out and some Micheline ordered destroyed. Apparently, a huge amount of stuff remains to be published including a volume of early poetry called "Notes to the Lost Cities"

In a note on the text, editor Matt Gonzalez acknowledging some difficulty in working with the not always sweet-tempered Micheline writes, "Suffice it to say we both welcome the book's publication." For different reasons so should every one else.

*Sixty Seven Poems for Downtrodden Saints is available at Adobe Books 3166 16th Street for \$10 plus tax.*

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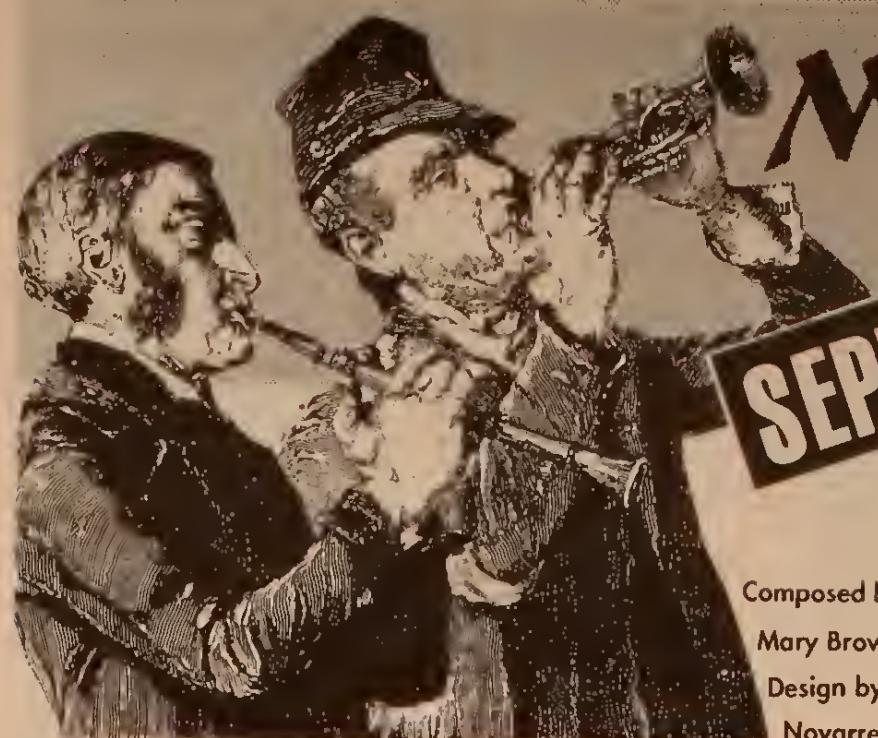
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# Mission District Calendar

1

## MONDAY

**The Church Man** - Alex Donis's full-scale art installation, "My Cathedral" uses sound, video and light to transform the Galeria de la Raza space into an intimate Cathedral, where churchgoers can spot Fidel Castro smooching with Che Guevara and Pope John Paul II slipping a little tongue to Mahatma Gandhi. The installation stays installed until September 27. 2857 24th Street, free, 826-8009.



will be aired throughout September on KQED TV9. 6-8:30 pm, KQED Broadcasting Center, 2601 Mariposa at Bryant, free, must RSVP, 553-2382.

4

## THURSDAY

**Home Buyers** - Inhabitants of collective and cooperative households are invited to Commonests monthly Soup Night for intentional communities. Tonight's presentation focuses on the many tricky ways for collectives to buy and finance shared houses. 6:30pm, 777 Valencia at 19th, New College Theater, \$1, 974-4384.



2

## TUESDAY

**Muuusic** - Bring your own goatee to this concert by Simone White and Metafour. It's jazz. It's live. 9pm, Elbo Room, 647 Valencia at 18th, \$3, 552-7788.



3

## WEDNESDAY

**September Critical** - An impressive array of artists and thinking tanks are panelists at the opening night of "September Critical," a month long public venting, discussion and critical analysis of the arts. Keith Hennessy, Joan Holden, Jon Jang, Rob Nilsson, Jayne Wenger, Jorge Cortiñas and Aaron Noble will discuss collaborative art at "Who's on First? The Riddle of Collaboration." 8pm, Intersection for the Arts, 446 Valencia, free, 626-2787.



**Hispanic Heritage** - Live and unnamed cultural and folk art performances will highlight a Hispanic Heritage Month celebration honoring local heroes. Profiles of unsung heroes Melba Maldonado, Luis Chavez and Yolanda M. Lopez

5

## FRIDAY

**Guatemalan Exile** - Slides and videos are part of "Morning After Longest Night: the Guatemalan return from exile," a panel presentation on the human rights situation for repatriated Guatemalans. Speakers include Rebeca Alvarez Altaref, a lesbian physician from Guatemala and Ryan Warner of Amnesty International. 8pm, Metropolitan Community Church, 150 Eureka at 18th, free, 863-4436.



**Merchant of Mission** - Mission District merchants are invited to informational panels on accessing capital, the legal aspects of drugs/alcohol in the workplace, on-line banking and selling on the Internet plus other fascinating business type things at the 4th Mission Business Forum. 10am-3pm, Mission Cultural Center, 2868 Mission, free.

6

## SATURDAY



**Ban Vayage** - Last chance to say "Adios" to Havana-bound Brigadistas of the International Feminist Brigade to Cuba at their music-packed, food-packed, party-packed, get packing Adieu Cuban singer/songwriter Germán Donatien is there to sing/songs as are Francine & Nymiah, two wild women with two tame gui-tars. The big bash also features a big buffet named, "A Taste of Cuba." 7:30pm, New Valencia Hall, 1908 Mission at 15th, \$5-7.50, 864-1278.

7

## SUNDAY

**Medea Project** - Rhodessa Jones directs "From Whores to Matriarchs: Black Women Survivors on the Edge," a look at being both a black woman and a survivor in America. The performance, featuring Deborah Edwards, weaves together survivors voices through song, narrative, poetry, chants and movement. 8pm, Luna Sea Women's Performance Project, 2940 16th suite 216C, \$10-15 sliding, 863-2989.

**Dance** - Moves in General brings together dance, theater and music (accordion!) to explore the roles of modern wonder women in "Nothing Really," a dance-theater commentary-on-commentary about the minuscule evolutionary steps for women: from cave, to house, to corporate office. 8pm, Shotwell Studios, 3252A 19th at Shotwell, \$10, 677-9117.



8

## MONDAY

**A Driving Thought** - It's day one of Back to Transit Week. Think about that for a few minutes while you're stuck in your car alone in traffic, or stranded waiting for a non-existent MUNI bus, or while cars whip past you and your bicycle with only inches to spare. Sept. 8-12.



**Double Your Pain** - Media Alliance and the National Writers Union present a cutting edge panel on repetitive stress injuries and the common hack. Topics covered include prevention, legal issues, and voice recognition software. 7pm, \$10, 546-6491.

9

## TUESDAY

**Poetry Flash** - Jimmy Lyons and Ron Denicola are the featured poets for the night, but don't fret, you can still join in afterwards at the "great open Mike."



7pm, Keane's 3300 Club, 3300 Mission Street, free, 826-6886.

10

## WEDNESDAY

**Traffic Calming** - Find out what has been happening with the Valencia campaign to promote a safe street for neighbors, pedestrians and bicyclists. 6:30pm, free, call for location, 431-2453.



11

## THURSDAY

**Americar** - Erin-Kate Whitcomb and Elaine Tse take on multi-character emoting roles in "Route 80: Cars, Cows and Caffeine," a cross-country odyssey through the rarely explored issues of family, dating, love, legacy, sex and death. 8pm, Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th, \$12-19, 861-5079.



**The Funnies** - In their very first theatrical event, Tongue in a Mood Theatre, a Filipino American comedy group, presents "Tsismis (chiz miz)" a journey into the darker corners of Filipino American culture. Opening night. 8pm, Bindlestiff Studio, 185 6th at Howard, \$10, 431-8842.

12

## FRIDAY

**1 Mile Shebang** - The compact, vibrant area in a one mile radius from 16th and Mission is chock full of compact, vibrant artists, who are the focus of "One-Mile Shebang," a celebration and exhibition and general show-off of artists, writers, video and filmmakers living/working within this one mile. There's a bunch of free and cheap events all month. Opening night of the Shebang highlights 18 local artists at their art opening reception tonight. 6-8pm, Collision Gallery, 417 14th Street, free, 431-4074.



**Juke Joint** - An array of blues, jazz, rap, and spirituals will transform the Luna Sea space into "Juke Joint Sistahs Singin'," a night club cabaret. Performers include Allegra Bandy, Sandi Poindexter, Toy A.K.A. Combless Negro Child, Kymberly Jackson, Toni Pope, Shelley D., Terra Diva and Carmen White. 8pm, Luna Sea Women's Performance Project, 2940 16th Street, \$10-15, runs 12th-14th, Sunday's show is for women of color only, 863-2989.



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**Fighting Artists** - The Army Street Art Space (or the Artspace formerly known as Army Street) presents an opening night reception for "Super Fight No. 1" featuring Shepard Fairley and Ken Sigafos versus the World. Absurdist propaganda and politop eyecandy team up in this war between art and reality. 7-10pm, Army Street Art Space, 3435 Cesar Chavez at Valencia, free, ages 18+, 642-6198.

13

## SATURDAY



**Ask Isadora** - The Isadora Duncan Dance Center is flinging open its doors for an open house afternoon with the promise of mysterious "special surprises." 10am-1pm, Isadora Duncan Dance Center, 3435 Cesar Chavez at Valencia, free, 587-0730.

**1 Mile Shebang** - As part of the 16th & Mission one mile radius artists shebang, tonight's reading is reserved only for local writers/readers with interesting names. Come hear Tisa Bryant, Eugene Ostashevsky, Giovanni Singleton, and Rodrigo Toscano. 8pm, Collision Gallery, 417 14th Street, free, 626-2787.

**Barrio Party** - Peña del Sur, Nuevo Horizonte and Pajaro Latinoamericano present an evening of music, song, poetry, visual arts and dance at its Festival Cultural del Barrio. 9pm, Capp Street Center, 362 Capp at 18th, \$5, 550-1101.

**AIDS Advocacy** - A comprehensive new training workshop for AIDS advocates and activists starts today, presenting up-to-date information, effective advocacy tips, and ways participants can become involved in fast-breaking policy issues. The weekend workshop developed by the SF AIDS Foundation is free to pre-registrants 8:30-4:30, 10 United Nations Plaza (at Market & 7th), free, 487-3034.

14

## SUNDAY



**Tight Foot** - Dancers' Group presents "Local 8" a showcase for Bay Area Choreographers, including original choreography by Karen Abrams, Chris Black, Hilary Bryan, Jenifer Golden, Stephanie Hook, Rachel Shaw, Sommer Ulrickson, and Emily Wilson. 8pm, Dancers' Group Studio Theater, 3221 22nd at Mission, \$8, 824-5044.

**Our Fair Fair** - The 24th Street Fair/Festival de las Americas is happening all day today. See page 3 for more info.

17

## WEDNESDAY



**Crawling for Art** - If the mere thought of cavorting around with other arty farty and/or excessively hip hipsters makes your skin crawl, then you ought to avoid tonight's Mission Art Crawl. If you like that sort of thing, then polish up your sneakers and call Intersection for the Arts for up-to-date information. 6-10pm, 626-3311.

18

## THURSDAY



**Cine Acción** - Opening night of Festival ¡Cine

Latino! (one of the nation's largest Latino film festival) features the West Coast debut of feature film "Football Stories" by Chilean filmmaker Andrés Wood and "Jó" a short by Beto Brant and Ralph Strelow. The reception stars lots of food and drink, and Chilean cultural entertainment. 6pm reception & 8pm screen time, Victoria Theater, 2961 16th Street, call for ticket price, 553-8135.

**Mime Troupe** - Mime Troupe members have revived "Revenger Rat," a tale of corporate buffoonery and the tobacco hypocrisy for a new and timely fall schedule. No smoking in the theater. 4pm, New College Theater, 777 Valencia at 19th, free, 285-1717.

19

## FRIDAY



**Girlz on Bikez** - Ladies and ladies, may I have your attention? Tonight is time once again for the limly female, likeably bikeable ride-about in our fair city and continuation of last month's Labor tour. For ladies only. 7pm, free, meets at Women's Building, 18th at Lapidge.

20

## SATURDAY



**Hyper-critical Mass** - Although those Critical Mass bikers should rot in jail for trying to ride their bicycles in the street, some bleeding hearts have organized a benefit for their legal defense fund. Featured films include Ted White's "Return of the Scorchers," Bill Daniel's "Bikeman's Holiday," and various sparkling super-8 selections from Jim Swanson. Plus plenty of historical shorts and a uproariously funny compilation of news reports from last month's Critical "Mess." Doors open 8pm, screening at 8:30, Artists Television Access, 992 Valencia at 21st, \$5, 824-3890.

**Internet** - Feeling left out because you're the only kid on the block without instant access to computer pornography?! Get internet jargon descrambled for you at "Internet for the Overwhelmed," a three-hour beginners workshop on all you need to know to log on to the World Wide Web, e-mail and FTP. 4pm, Artists Television Access, 992 Valencia at 21st, \$15, 824-3890.

21

## SUNDAY



**Cine Acción** - Festival ¡Cine Latino! continues with a day long program of films divided into categories ranging from Amor Mexican Style Dreams to Visions from the Americas. 11am-9:15pm screen times, Victoria Theater, 2961 16th Street, call for ticket price, 553-8135.

22

## MONDAY



**1 Mile Shebang** - Performance presentations by artists living/working within a one mile radius of 16th & Mission continues with readings by local writers and local readers: Nona Caspers, Justin Chin, Paul LaFarge, Al Lujan, and Katia Noyes. 8pm, Intersection for the Arts, 446 Valencia, free, 626-2787.

23

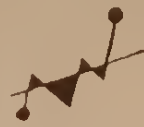
## TUESDAY



**Outsider Films** - Center for the Arts presents "Outlaws and Obsessions," a film and video series scrutinizing the obsessive nature of "outsider" artists, featuring a variety of short, medium, and long films. Films screen all day Noon-5pm, Center for the Arts, 701 Mission at 3rd, \$5 (includes access to the museum), 978-ARTS.

24

## WEDNESDAY



**Have No Fear** - The author of *Nothing Bad Happens to Good Girls* is here to discuss her new book, a study on the effect fear has on women from different racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Esther Madriz's study explores women's perception of fear and how it controls behavior while keeping women in self-limiting positions. 7:30pm, Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia at 20th, free, 282-9246.

25

## THURSDAY



**Magical Dancism** - The Della Davidson Dance Theatre conceived and created "Night Stories: The Eva Luna Project, first cycle," a dance/theater work based on the writings by Chilean author Isabel Allende. Music composed by Richard Marriott and performed in English and Spanish by The Clubfoot Ensemble. It's preview night. 8pm, Theater Artaud, 450 Florida at 17th, \$12.50-18.50, 621-7797.

26

## FRIDAY



**1 Mile Shebang** - As part of the whole whoop de doo celebration of artists living/working within one mile of 16th & Mission, there's an evening of video and filmmaking by extremely local artists. 8pm, Artists Television Access, 992 Valencia at 20th, \$5, 824-3890.

27

## SATURDAY



**Women of Color** - A sensuous and powerful group of women explore the power of the erotic through sexy and soulful spoken word, poetry, dance and song in "Liquid Fire," part of Luna Sea's Women of Color Month. Or maybe it's sexy and soulful women exploring through sensuous and powerful spoken word, etc. 8pm, Luna Sea Women's Performance Project, 2940 16th Street, \$10-15 sliding scale, Sunday is for women of color only, 863-2989.

28

## SUNDAY



**Art PR** - Learn how to manipulate local Calendar Editors into publicizing your event verbatim at "Using the Press: Publicity for Artists," an intensive ATA lecture/workshop on publicity "Learn how to write an effective press release, where to send it, what to send, strategies for effective coverage." 5:30-8:30, Artists Television Access, 992 Valencia at 21st, \$20, 824-3890.

**Go Climb a Rock** - Or in this case, pay to watch someone else go climb up a lake rock at, at, at, rocket speed. It's the finals in a national fake rock climbing (aka indoor sports climbing) competition. Highlights include speedy climbing and time pressure difficulties. 10am-3:30pm, Mission Cliffs, 2295 Harrison Street, \$10, 550-0515.

30

## TUESDAY



**Poetry** - Beatzine poets Lonnie Hull Dupont, Ellen Elliott, Noni Howard and Mary Rudge are sure to give common words quite a thrashing at this beat poetry reading. Free munchies. 7pm, Keane's 3300 Club, 3300 Mission Street, free, 826-6886.

**Cops R Us** - Find out about the local crime scene and what the police are up to at this monthly neighborhood police meeting. This is your chance to let the police know exactly what's on your mind. And it's a community meeting — they have to sit and listen to you! 6pm, Mission Police Station, 630 Valencia at 17th, free.

## FREE Outdoor Events in Yerba Buena Gardens

Tuesdays, September 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30, 12:30 - 1:30 pm

**Latino Voices** - Fiction read by Luminarias

Thursdays, September 4, 11, 18 & 25, 12 noon - 1:30 pm

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**African American Shakespeare Company performs As You Like It**

Saturday, September 20, 7-9 pm

**Twilight Gamelan in the Gardens**

Sunday, September 28, 10 am-4 pm

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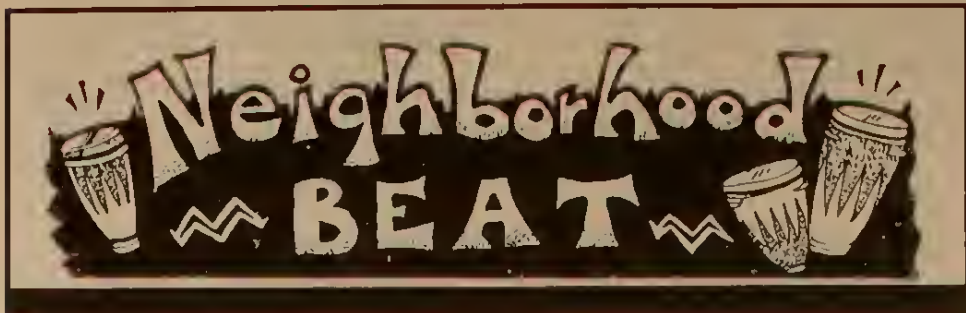
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## Mini-Muralism

Eighteen trash receptacles on 16th Street between Church and Mission are now decorated with the artwork of 35 kids from the St. John's Urban Institute. Some of the thirty-five young people who partic-

ipated in the beautification project sponsored by St. John's Educational Threshold Center are pictured above with some friends and supporters. Photo by Arthur Hudson



## Maxi-Muralism

For large scale muralism at its best check out this recently completed 2100 square foot piece on the new Arriba Juntos building at 1850 Mission Street. This

mural by Catalina Gonzalez was awarded the 1997 Greater Mission Award for Best New Art. Photo by Arthur Hudson.

## City May Seize 23rd and Treat Lot

On September 22, the Board of Supervisors will finally decide whether or not to declare eminent domain and forcibly take possession of the empty lot and proposed park site at 23rd and Treat.

The Calle 22 Neighborhood Association has worked to put a park at this location for over five years, funds for that purpose have been available for three years and the park's design was completed in 1994

A dispute over removal of contaminants left behind by the lot's former occupant,

the San Francisco Building Materials Company, has put the project on hold since February of 1995.

According to Harry Quinn of the City's Real Estate Department, the City has been trying to negotiate the purchase of 23rd and Treat from the current owners for more than two years. He indicated that if this group of nine owners signs a sales agreement before the City goes to court, eminent domain proceedings would be halted. "One way or another we want to move forward as soon as possible."

## Mission Library will be relocated during seismic work, renovations

Our funky but loveable neighborhood library is about to get some long delayed and much needed physical improvements. It will take a while, but the finished product should be well worth the wait.

On September 15, the Mission Branch Library will begin moving from its 24th and Bartlett location to a temporary site on the 5th floor of the Bayview Tower at 2601 Mission (on the corner of 22nd) while retrofitting and renovation work takes place. Improvements to the 82 year-old, unreinforced masonry building — the first branch library in San Francisco — are expected to be completed by May of 1999. During the transfer of the library's materials, the adult section will be closed for six weeks between September 15 and October 26. The children's section will be closed first day of the move (September 15) and during the last two weeks (October 13 - 26).

The temporary location is not large enough to hold all of the books in the branch's collections, so a twenty-percent downsizing will be necessary. This means 16,000 fewer books will be available during the twenty-month period of renovations. The branch, however, will continue

to make new purchases throughout this period, so that when the 24th Street building is re-opened, library users will have an even wider selection than is currently available to them.

The \$4,220,000 branch "redo" will include seismic upgrading and an elevator for disabled access. The central stairway will be removed, thereby creating a very large, main reading room. There will be a new heating and ventilation system, which is good news for those who have endured the chilly winters and stuffy summers at the Mission Branch. Services will be modernized with the addition of a computer lab, and printmaker Emmanuel Montoya will create a series of multicultural murals.

The outside of the branch building will be altered by construction of an external stairway and the moving of the entrance from 24th Street to Bartlett. Otherwise, the decorative architectural work will be preserved.

This project is funded from Library Improvement Bonds, the Earthquake Safety Program and a grant from the Library Services Construction Act.

For further information call the Mission Branch Library at 695-5090



## Mission Youth Soccer League is celebrating its sixth anniversary

In 1992, with a lot of help from the California Youth Soccer Association (CYSA) that has over 150,000 youth soccer players in Northern California, the Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, and Tom Brock, Juan Gonzalez, Larry Kischmischian and I founded the Mission Youth Soccer League (MYSL).

MYSL combines soccer with mentoring by the coaches, as well as referrals to tutoring and counseling services, to create a surrogate family environment with continuity provided by long term, volunteer parent coaches.

MYSL is currently providing ten supervised hours of soccer practice and games

per week for 1,000 youths during the summer, and more than 600 youths year-round for \$40,000 — roughly 15 cents per client hour. This includes liability and medical insurance; coaches, referees, uniforms and equipment; registration and tournament fees, as well as training and certification for referees and coaches.

Nearly all of MYSL's forty-plus coaches are parent volunteers, trained and certified by the California Youth Soccer Association (CYSA).

MYSL registration is on going year-round. For further information, please contact MYSL League Coordinator, Jose Guzman at 648-8049 or 245-2143.

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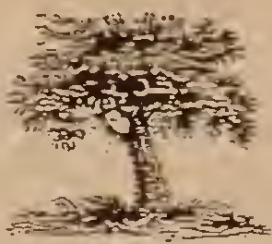
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# Seeing the Elephant



Lisa Milos

## Thousands at Mission Mumia Rally

ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, NEARLY 5,000 people filled the auditorium and the cafeteria at Mission High School to show their support for and demand the release of Mumia Abu Jamal, an African American award winning journalist and former Black Panther Party member who has been on death row for the past 16 years for allegedly shooting a police officer in Philadelphia in 1981. The rally launched plans for a nationwide Day of Mobilization to free Mumia.

set for December 6. The spirited audience at the event had an outstanding number of youth, who were also represented by the ACLU Youth League and the Jo Jo White Solidarity Project.

The main speakers were Geronimo Pratt, the former Black Panther Party leader recently released after 27 years of incarceration for a crime he did not commit; Leonard Weinglass, Mumia's lead defense lawyer; world famous writer Alice Walker; and Walter Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer of the SF Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Tupac Shakur's mother attended, as well as long time activist Angela Davis. San Francisco Supervisors Reverend Amos Brown and Tom Amiano gave their full support for the upcoming mobilization campaign and official proclamations by the Board of Supervisors and Mayor Willie Brown were read, declaring August 16 "Justice for Mumia Abu Jamal Day."

On an international level, the support for Mumia's release has been overwhelming. Hundreds of thousands of people from Europe, Africa and Australia have signed petitions, and members of the Danish and Japanese legislatures, ministers of Germany and Belgium, as well as Nelson Mandela and other heads of state have asked that Mumia receive a new trial.

The flagrant violations of civil rights and due process committed by the police, the prosecution and Judge Sabo against Mumia are too numerous to mention all in this article. Potential witnesses whose declarations could have proven Mumia's innocence admitted to being threatened and/or bribed by police; motions by the defense to obtain crucial evidence that the prosecution is legally

required to provide have been denied by Judge Sabo; Mumia's constitutional right to defend himself has been revoked and the jury was rigged by the prosecution to exclude as many as eleven African American who were qualified as potential jurors.

Up until the signing of the Anti Terrorist Act of 1996, the last recourse left for death penalty cases was the federal courts, which since 1990 had overturned 300 cases. One of the provisions of the 1996 Act severely restricts the power of the federal courts to independently review state proceedings, in effect, deferring that power to the states and permitting the state convictions to stand, even if violations of federal law occurred.

In 1979, the U.S. Department of Justice sued the Philadelphia Police Department on corruption charges. Part of the evidence used in this case was obtained through the journalistic investigations carried out and reported by Mumia Abu Jamal.

In 1995, while the media concentrated all of its efforts in "analyzing" the O.J. Simpson trial, Mumia Abu Jamal and thousands of others in the world were fighting for his life, after Governor Ridge had signed his death warrant.

This is not only a death penalty case. It is not only a case of racial injustice which is rampant in this country. It is a case of state terrorism and political persecution against anyone that exposes state corruption.

In a book published in 1990 entitled *The COINTELPRO Papers*, authors Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall expose the FBI's surveillance and sabotage program by documenting FBI infiltration into civil rights organizations, as well as the Black Panther Party, among others. The prime FBI objective was to divide these organizations, framing or otherwise "neutralizing" its leaders.

Many of the "rights" that you and I now claim to possess were won in the streets, thanks, in part, to these organizations and to many of its leaders, some of whom were beaten, killed or incarcerated. What few people realize is that we are losing the little that we have. What many don't realize is that unless we defend the lives of the courageous few that expose these injustices, there will be no one left to defend us when the crosshairs target us between the eyes.

It's our turn now. Mobilize on December 6!

For more information call (415) 821-0459 or send E-mail to: [shorstmann@msn.com](mailto:shorstmann@msn.com)

ACLU (La Unión Americana por los Derechos Civiles) y el Jo Jo White Solidarity Project.

Los oradores principales fueron Gerónimo Pratt, ex-miembro de las Panteras Negras, recientemente liberado después de 27 años de encarcelamiento por un crimen que no cometió; Leonard Weinglass, el abogado principal de Mumia; la escritora Alice Walker y Walter Johnson Secretario y Tesorero del SF Labor Council, AFL-CIO. También asistieron personalidades importantes que no fueron previamente anunciadas entre ellas la madre de Tupac Shakur, como también la renombrada activista Angela Davis. También estuvieron presentes los Supervisores de San Francisco Reverendo Amos Brown y Tom Amiano. El evento contó con el mérito de proclamaciones oficiales tanto de la Mesa de Supervisores como también del Alcalde Willie Brown declarando el día 16 de Agosto el Día de Justicia para Mumia Abu Jamal.

La cantidad de adherentes a la campaña para liberar a Mumia ha asumido proporciones internacionales. Cientos de miles de personas de Europa, Africa y Australia han firmado peticiones y destacados miembros de



Afeni Shakur, mother of Tupac Shakur and Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt at the Mumia rally

las cámaras legislativas de Dinamarca y Japón y Nelson Mandela, junto a otros jefes de estados y ministros de países como Alemania y Bélgica, han exigido que al menos se le otorgue un nuevo juicio.

Las violaciones a los derechos civiles y de procedimiento legal cometido por la policía, la fiscalía y el Juez Sabo en contra de Mumia son flagrantes y demasiado numerosas para mencionarlas todas en este artículo. Testigos potenciales cuyas declaraciones hubieran comprobado la inocencia de Mumia han admitido que fueron amenazados o comprados por la policía y los fiscales para que no atestiguaran o para que presentaran declaraciones falsas que le hizo parecer culpable. Mociones legales para obtener evidencia crucial que por ley, los fiscales tienen que compartir, fueron negadas a la defensa por el Juez Sabo. El derecho constitucional del culpado de representarse a sí mismo le ha sido revocado a Mumia y el jurado fue arreglado para que se excluyeran al menos 11 Africanos Americanos.

Con la firma del Acta Anti-Terrorista de 1996, el último recurso que le quedaba a los miles de casos de pena de muerte les ha sido obstruido. Hasta ese año, estos podían recurrir a los tribunales federales para una revisión independiente de los casos estatales. Desde 1990, estos tribunales han revertido más de 300 fallos estatales. Ahora los tribunales federales serán severamente restringidos en sus poderes, cediendo ese poder a los estados y así permitiendo que los fallos estatales se efectúen aun cuando ha habido serias violaciones al derecho federal.

En 1979, el Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos demandó al Departamento de Policía de Philadelphia por corrupción. Parte de la evidencia utilizada en esos cargos fue recopilada en base a investigaciones periodísticas realizados y reportados por Mumia Abu Jamal.

En 1995, mientras que los medios de comunicación concentraban sus esfuerzos "analizando" el caso de O.J. Simpson, Mumia Abu Jamal y cientos de otros en el mundo estaban luchando por su vida después de que el Gobernador Ridge de Pennsylvania firmara su orden de ejecución.

Este caso no es solo uno que trata sobre la pena de muerte y sus implicaciones morales, tampoco es sólo un caso sobre la injusticia racial que es endémico en este país. Es un caso de terrorismo de estado y persecución política en contra de cualquier persona que se atreve a denunciar la corrupción política.

En un libro publicado en 1990 y titulado, *The COINTELPRO Papers*, los autores Ward Churchill y Jim Vander Wall denuncian el programa de espionaje de la FBI que documenta su infiltración en organizaciones de derechos civiles como también al de las Panteras Negras entre otros. El objetivo principal fue el de crear divisiones, someter a sus miembros a procesos legales con cargos falsos o de alguna manera "neutralizar" a sus líderes.

Muchos de los "derechos" que tu y yo podemos ahora reclamar fueron ganados en las calles, gracias en parte a estas organizaciones, gracias a muchos de sus líderes quienes fueron golpeados, asesinados o encarcelados en el camino. Lo que pocos se dan cuenta es que estamos perdiendo lo poquito que se ha ganado, lo que pocos entienden es que si no defendemos la vida de los que tienen el coraje de denunciar las injusticias no quedara nadie para defendernos a nosotros mismos cuando sea nuestra la frente que estará en el centro del blanco.

Ahora nos toca a nosotros. ¡Unase a la movilización para el 6 de diciembre!

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## Miles asisten a manifestacion para Mumia Abu Jamal

EL SABADO 16 DE AGOSTO CASI 5,000 personas llenaron el auditorio y la cafeteria de Mission High School demostrando su apoyo y exigiendo la libertad de Mumia Abu Jamal, un periodista Africano Americano y ex-miembro de las Panteras Negras que está enfrentando la pena de muerte por haber supuestamente matado a un policia en Philadelphia en 1981.

El evento lanzó la campaña para llevar a cabo una movilización a nivel nacional que se efectuará el día 6 de diciembre para liberar a Mumia.

Al evento concurrieron un gran número de jóvenes, muchos representados por organizaciones como la Liga de Jóvenes del



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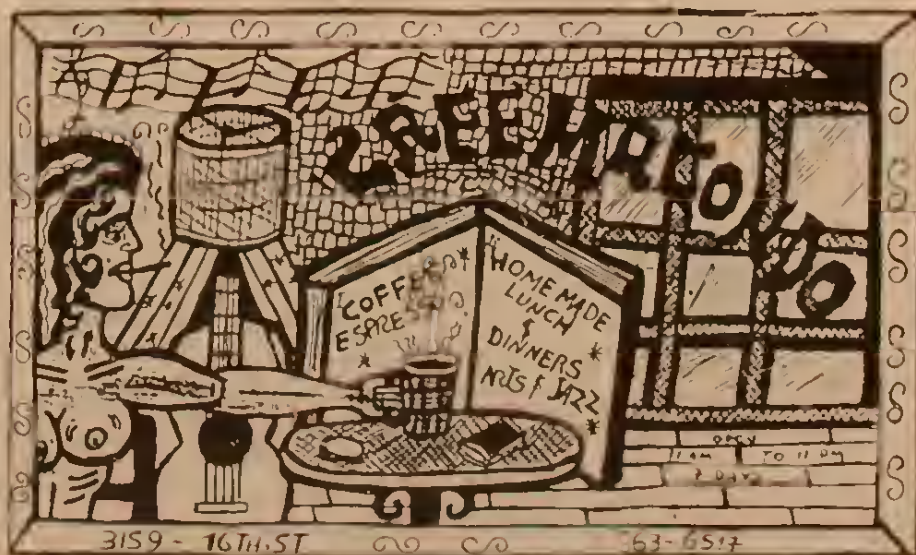
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## Super Notes

Jose Medina



### King's dream will be defended despite Prop.209

CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO IS running a series titled *Great Careers Start at CCSF*. As a CCSF alumnus, I was honored by their desire to feature my story and career path in their series. After all, my education has helped me face community issues with a broad perspective and an informed mind. Not long ago, I could have said go for it! If I can get an education, you can get one, too. If you belong to a minority group, you can still be admitted to an open door institution like City College. Unfortunately, this is not true of all California schools of higher learning. Communities of color are at risk of losing the rights we have paid for with blood, sweat and tears over the last two hundred years. Proposition 209, which has not been put into effect yet, has already been established as a legal threat to the civil rights of Californians. In the University of California System alone, education opportunities for Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans are astonishingly low. Boalt College, in particular, has recorded a shameful 81 percent reduction in the number of African American students and a disgraceful fifty percent drop in the number of Latinos admitted to the school. The admissions disparity is so poignant that the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the United States Department of Education, prompted by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), began a formal

investigation into the admission policies of Boalt College, Davis and UCLA law schools. Meanwhile, the legal road we have taken to prevent Proposition 209 from going into effect has been getting pretty humpy. On August 22, 1997 we suffered another set back when a federal court of appeals, in our own city, voted to uphold this new and offensive law. Civil Rights groups from all over the state plan to take the matter all the way to the Supreme Court, and rightfully so. What a shame it would be to see the ground work laid by Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez and so many other modern heroes, collapse under such a hypocritical policy of escapism. I have personally met with Reverend Jesse Jackson and other community leaders from various ethnic groups that want to protect opportunities for minorities and women and vanish the stench of anti-immigrant California politics. We anticipate that no less than twenty-three states across the nation might want to use California as a model for their own anti-affirmative action agendas. Hence we must, for the sake of the visionaries of the past and the generations of the future, continue the struggle for our rights. The *Save the Dream* march of August 28, 1997 became an overwhelming symbol of support for affirmative action, but the struggle for our rights did not end there. As for me, I will do what I can to squash Proposition 209. If we are to have a seat at the table and be equitable partakers in a democratic society we must retain our entry into business and education opportunities. Even President Clinton recently alluded to our *Bridge to the 21st Century*; however, I remind you that without access to higher education, communities of color will never cross that bridge. I encourage you to act in support of saving the dream.

### 209 no acabará con el sueño de Martin L. King

EL CITY COLLEGE de San Francisco está publicando una serie de anuncios titulada *Carreras Importantes Empiezan en CCSF*. Como yo estudié en CCSF, tuve el honor de ser invitado a presentar la historia de mi carrera en esa serie. Después de todo, mi educación me ha ayudado a enfrentar los problemas de la comunidad con una perspectiva amplia y una mente informada. No hace mucho, yo pude haber dicho: ¡Adelante! Si yo puedo recibir una educación también usted puede hacerlo. Si usted también es minoría todavía puede ser admitido en una institución de puertas abiertas como el City College. Lástima que esto no se vea en otras instituciones educativas de nivel superior en el estado de California. Las personas de color corren el riesgo de perder los derechos que hemos adquirido con el sudor de la frente, lágrimas y sangre en el transcurso de los últimos doscientos años. La Proposición 209, la cual aún no entra en vigor, ya se ha establecido como una amenaza perfectamente legal en contra de los derechos de los ciudadanos de California. Simplemente en el sistema universitario de California, las oportunidades educativas de los latinos, afro-americanos, asiáticos e indios han disminuido sorprendentemente. El Boalt College, en particular, anunció una vergonzosa reducción de un 81 por ciento en el número de matriculaciones de estudiantes afro-americanos y una haza del 50 por ciento en las matriculaciones de estudiantes latinos. Esta incongruencia es tan alarmante que la Oficina por los Derechos del Ciudadano dentro del Departamento de Educación de los Estados

Unidos, cedió a la presión del Fondo Mexico-Americano para la Defensa Legal y la Educación (MALDEF) e inició una investigación formal de la política de admisión en Boalt College y las facultades de derecho de Davis y Los Angeles. Mientras tanto, el sendero legal que hemos tomado para evitar la implementación de la Proposición 209 ha estado bastante rocoso. El 22 de agosto de 1997 sufrimos una derrota cuando un tribunal federal de apelación en nuestra ciudad ordenó que se adopte esta ofensiva ley. Organizaciones que apoyan los derechos del ciudadano procedentes de todo el estado ya están planeando continuar la batalla hasta llegar al Tribunal Superior de Justicia. Qué vergüenza sería que una política hipócrita de escapismo pudiera destruir la labor de los héroes modernos como Martín Luther King, Jr., César Chavez y tantos otros. Ultimamente me reuní con el Reverendo Jesse Jackson y otros representantes de varias comunidades que desean proteger las oportunidades de las minorías y las mujeres y que quieren hacer desaparecer el hedor de la política anti-inmigrante en California. Sahemos que por lo menos veintitrés estados quisieran usar a California como modelo de destrucción de otros programas de acción afirmativa. Por esta razón y por la memoria de los visionarios del pasado y las generaciones del futuro debemos seguir luchando por nuestros derechos. La marcha *Save the Dream* del 28 de agosto de 1997 se ha convertido en un símbolo de solidaridad con la acción afirmativa, pero la lucha no ha terminado y yo voy hacer todo lo posible por obstruir a la Proposición 209. Si vamos a defender nuestro lugar en la mesa y vamos a tomar lo que nos corresponde en una sociedad democrática tendremos que defender nuestro acceso a las oportunidades económicas y a la educación. El mismo Presidente Clinton aludió recientemente a el *Puente al Siglo XXI*. Yo les recuerdo que sin educación las comunidades de color nunca van a cruzar ese puente.

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# La Tina



Paula Tejada

## The play's the thing...

I was fortunate to live in New York during the last couple of years of the New York Latino Festival produced by Joseph Papp (QEPD), better known as the producer of Free Shakespeare in the Park. The New York Latino Festival compensated for a New York summer. The festival brought dance, theater, film, and music from different Latin American and Caribbean countries. Part of it was free to the public at the Delacorte Theater (NYC's Greek Theater) in Central Park. I saw a presentation of "Romeo and Juliet" by Teatro Campesino e Indigena de México, and a Brazilian production of "Midsummer Nights Dream" so imaginative and beautiful, it left Broadway looking pretty anemic. The Brazilian production made New York's local news, not for its beauty though, but because the fairies had their bodies painted white and went topless. Some ridiculous fool cried immorality but no one in New York gave him the time of day.

The very summer Joseph Papp died, the NY Latino Festival met the same destiny; it simply lost its budget. Not only was I shocked to witness the flow of some of the best films and theater interrupted, but in a city that calls itself the "Capital of the world," there was not a single coalition interested in the festival's survival. New York City lost a major cultural contribution, and I insist that it was a loss for the entire city, not just the Latino community.

## And speaking of culture...

This month there will be plenty of cultural activity going on around the Mission. September is the month most Latin American countries celebrate their national independence day. The 24th Street Merchants will be presenting "Festival de las Américas on September 14 along 24th Street, featuring food, dance and music, from Mexico down to Chile. Contrary to popular belief, Latin American countries are culturally very different from one another. Don't miss it; it should be fun.

September also brings us the opening night of the "San Francisco Latino Film Festival" this year hosted by yours truly, Thursday, September 18 at the Victoria Theater. The Latino Film Festival opens with a new Chilean Film, "Football Stories", directed by Andrés Woods, who will be present at the ceremony. The reception will present music performed by Peruvian songwriter Homero Oyarce and the Chilean folklore dance ensemble "Sueño Americano".

## And also on the subject of Chile

For those that read my column, you probably know that I own Chile Lindo and continually complain about the hardships of running a small business. So, my husband Dennis Maxwell and I are throwing in the towel, and giving up on our corner of the Redstone Building. We also produced "Fiesta Chilena" last year, which we will not be able to wing this year. Nevertheless, we are grateful to our community that has been so supportive, from the days we started running sandwiches up and down Mission and Valencia, to our Chile Lindo adventure.

And that reminds me of another community business drama...

I want to say that I have a lot of appreciation for our community and it saddens

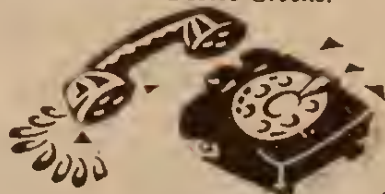
me when I see it so divisive. For example, the issue over the Dovre Club. The Irish are such an integral part of the Mission's history; they are an important part of this immigrant community and should be respected as such. Of course, an Irish bar coming out of the Women's Building is God's test on communal tolerance. I never met the late Pat Nolan, but he must have been very unique to get them guys to go drinking in the Women's Building in the first place. When I first realized the Dovre Club was located in the Women's Building, I was rather amused and found it unique. I made an analogy: something like the British in Hong Kong, or the North American Army Base at Guantanamo Bay, in Cuba. It's just one of those things that just are, in spite of how much we think we are in control. The issue here, as a community is: Why can't we get along?

## Then there's these bike people...

Since no self-respecting columnist would dare not to comment on Critical Mass, I'll give you my take. Anything that causes a traffic jam, hardship on the working class and costs the City money, I oppose. But, that was before I realized what Critical Mass really represents. In Spanish, we call it "el destape". It's what occurs in a society after a dictator dies, such as what happened in Spain after Franco's death. Society liberates itself. Critical Mass is a release valve for a much-needed outlet of "social pressures." I was standing outside of Chile Lindo for the July Critical Mega-Mass. They all cycled up 16th Street, and I would've joined them had it not been that my husband was stuck in traffic due to Critical Mass and had the key to the bike lock. I have not seen people having so much fun since I arrived in the City, and fun is the most therapeutic experience a society can have.

## And a fun thing coming up...

Given that San Francisco is the crib of the hippie movement, it's not surprising that a bicycle insurrection is taking place. Where else? Especially so close to the 30th anniversary of the Summer of Love. Bill McCarthy, of the Unity Foundation, is a Summer of Love original. I met him at the 16th Street/North Mission Association meetings, when he brought his expertise to help Sylvie, of Ti-Couz, organize the 16th Street block party. Among the many wonderful things he is part of is the Linda McCartney photo show exhibit at the Museum of the City of San Francisco at 2801 Leavenworth (on the Cannery's third floor), showing now through September 30. The Beatles performed their last concert at Candlestick Park thirty years ago in August 1967. The McCartney's have given their full support to the "30th Anniversary of the Summer of Love." The photo exhibit is Linda McCartney's "Sixties," with photos of the Summer of Love by San Francisco photojournalists Robert Altman, Baron Wolman and Herb Greene.



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# Letters to the Editor

There is always in your paper some racist remark against whites. This helps to create a fearful environment for whites who are your neighbors in the Mission, as well as a vulnerable minority. Let's be sensitive to everyone.

Randy Stipp

## Lisa Milos Responds

Although it would be fair to say poor whites have also been victims of police brutality, these are not easily identifiable targets, unless they are white youth who "hang" with minority youth, in which case, they get the full treatment. You do not seem to be very accustomed to living with fear (as most people of color are) but have somehow found the courage to speak for your "vulnerable minority." The "fearful environment" that haunts you is the same one that haunted the pilgrims when they looked at the Native Americans and the slave owners when they saw their slaves: the recurring nightmare that somehow, someday, somebody will blame them for the crimes committed by their race. As a "guar" (light skinned) Latina, I am fully aware that it is not the color of your skin that counts, but if you're white and oblivious, the only response I can give you is either my native New York one, (which you would probably find distasteful) or a typically California one: "I'm sorry you feel that way."

## Drug Deals at Wells Fargo

Editor,

In one week, I witnessed two drug deals negotiated inside the Wells Fargo Bank parking lot at 16th and Mission Streets with the security guard on duty. When I complained to the teller, I was given the brush off ("There's nothing we can do."). This is the same Wells Fargo where a man was murdered and the same neighborhood where a neighborhood activist was murdered. Tolerating increased drug dealing is tolerating crime and makes the neighborhood even more unsafe.

Of course there's something we can do! Neighbors working with the police and the city attorney were able to make a difference on Albion Street. Wells Fargo can make a difference or take the responsibility of being another landlord that sponsors illegal activities on their property.

E.B., Wells Fargo client and neighbor

## Saving Our Streets

Editor,

Making our streets safer isn't rocket science. Parking and Traffic Commissioner Sharon Betz' idea to ban cars from Market street isn't the best solution, but ignoring it won't make red light runners, bike-hating drivers, congestion and other problems go away. Market Street is a good place to start talking about what actually might make San Francisco streets safer.

Banning Muni busses from Market would be a good start. The F-line and underground rail car are perfectly adequate for downtown travel to destinations on or near Market Street. Bus routes that merge onto Market can be re-routed. The #19 bus routinely crosses Market, in and outbound, and some 19's turn right at 8th and Mission, turn right again on 9th Street and return to the Polk Street/Ghirardelli Square end of the route.

The Transbay Terminal serves as a turnaround point for several bus routes that then use overcrowded Market to return to the outbound portion of their daily travels. The bus terminal is perfect for this job, but Mission, Folsom and other streets are available as alternatives to you-know-what. Market Street could be a bicyclists'/motorcyclists' paradise. From 16th Street, or Church, to 1st (or even all the way to Drum and California), the bus islands could be stretched from intersection to intersection and moved to the right to create a true bike lane no larger vehicle could use. If cars could fit, you couldn't call them bike lanes!

Rerouting busses isn't easy. Change is hard. So what else is new? Bold, practical steps are required if we truly want to make San Francisco a safer place not to be in a car.

Thorton Kimes

## Lisa Milos' column

Editor,

Do you really condone the opinion that poor whites are not "fair game" for police brutality?



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# Da Column



**Willie Lewis Brown, Jr.**

## Neighborhood Beautification Program Sweeps Up

This isn't the first time I've touted the San Francisco Neighborhood Beautification Fund in these pages - nor is it likely to be the last - but I do have the pleasure of bringing my readers up to date on the enormous strides this immensely popular, win-win program has taken recently.

The NBF, which was created by the voters in 1990, sets a preference for funding youth programs and innovative projects that are neighborhood-based and designed to benefit areas of San Francisco that are economically disadvantaged.

Many of the projects employ youth to work after school or on weekends or weekdays in the summer months. Project supervisors tell us that these jobs change the young workers' attitudes toward litter and graffiti, and that they then often influence their friends' behavior.

The dollars for this program are generated from businesses that voluntarily choose to designate up to 1 percent of their business or payroll tax payments to the Neighborhood Beautification Fund. Since the NBF's inception in fiscal year 1990-91, business designations have poured more than \$2.2 million into our neighborhood-based beautification projects. And things are only getting better.

This year's grants, I'm ecstatic to report, total \$280,000 - that's a 127 percent increase over fiscal year 1996-97. Obviously, our business leaders are happy with the results of the NBF, and San Francisco's neighborhoods are reaping the benefits of their confidence.

This year, some 25 projects were funded in neighborhoods all over the City. Seven grantees are new recipients of NBF moneys, comprising 28 percent of the total allocations. Some examples include: Bayview Hunters Point Foundation: \$30,000 for weekly litter removal by youth; Creativity Explored: \$6,000 for creating a mural with disabled youth to abate graffiti at 16th and Dolores Streets; Chinatown Alleyway Improvement Association: \$17,500 for clean-ups and sidewalk steamcleaning in Chinatown; City Center Partnership: \$15,000 for graffiti removal in areas around Powell St. and in the Tenderloin

These are just a few of the fine, innovative programs that are improving the environment of neighborhoods - directly, hands-on and at the street-level. And it's not always dollars the NBF provides: one group received a Graffiti Defense Kit, providing paint and equipment for graffiti removal in lieu of cash.

The NBF grants are awarded in four main areas:

1. Ongoing graffiti removal (including mural projects, which are generally highly successful in abating graffiti)
2. Ongoing litter clean-ups
3. Urban forestry
4. General beautification (projects bene-

fitting a broad segment of the general public)

Since 1991, more than 800 square blocks have been cleaned of litter and graffiti. More than 580 trees have been planted. Some 130 trash receptacles have been placed. At least 30 murals have been painted. And 1,800 youth have helped perform clean-ups.

And remember, though NBF is funded by local businesses, support of this highly effective beautification program comes at no additional cost to the companies participating. About 20 percent of San Francisco's taxpaying businesses are participating - and we want more.

Businesses can opt for "automatic designation", which allows the Tax Collector to collect their 1 percent designation automatically each time they pay business taxes. It couldn't be simpler.

The legislation caps the fund at \$1 million annually, which has yet to be reached - \$521,000 in 1993-94 was NBF's best year. With your business' help, I think we can top that next year. This is truly an opportunity to see your hard-earned tax dollars put to good use right before your eyes.

For more information about the San Francisco Neighborhood Beautification Fund, and how to participate, call Director Kim Fowler at 415/554-9854.

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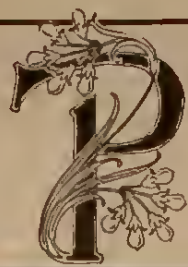
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## Poems of the Month

edited by **Barbara Bennett**

### Hoodoo Whisper

For Quincy Troupe



Send words to  
Barbara Bennett, Poetry Editor,  
New Mission News  
777 Valencia, SF Ca 94110  
S.F. CA 94110

Say it in sheets of sound  
power of language with big fists of teeth  
singing secrets from crossroads  
saying secrets from the hoodoo  
way up in St. Louis soil  
the groove of alphabets  
in the blues of new atlas  
in the geography of beats  
way up in a silent way  
like the sho' enuf shaman man you am

Say it because  
the pact was sealed in the other world-  
There are some  
who could daim the word for hisself  
who would wrap it in red doth  
who could caress it along fire  
like the marriage between flame and light  
who dip it in a repique of thunder  
make yr head flicker with the spirit of  
rhythm rhythm of spirit  
as if Shango himself  
had weaved you a red kufi

And there are some  
who trap the odu way up in them bones  
who spill the past & therefore future  
between blood and honey  
divine what ain't nobody seen  
And this here is an oriki  
in praise of the possibility of  
ka-ka-ki-tak tun of tongue  
in praise of those  
daiming their language  
tonal y todo  
with a hoodoo whispers  
like Miles Dewey Davis III  
like the sho' enuf shaman man you am

by Adrian Castro

A performance poet from Miami, a  
declamador of searing intensity, has a  
forthcoming book: *Cantos to Blood &  
Honey*, articulating his search for a  
cohesive Afro-Caribbean identity in the  
tradition of Luis Pales Matos y Nicolas  
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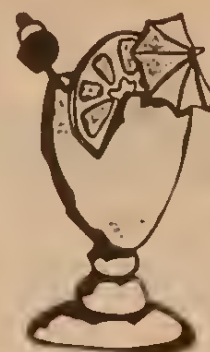
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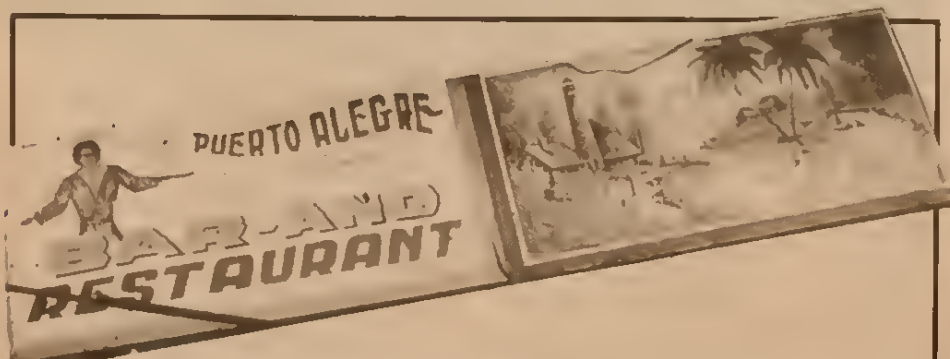
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# Health Matters



**Richard Pitt**

## Skin - the external lungs of the body

Our skin is the largest organ of the body. Its functions are vital to life. It is a major way in which the body detoxifies itself. In a way the skin is the external lungs of the body. Skin problems are one of the major reasons for which people seek medical attention. Some of the most common skin problems are acne, fungal infections, eczema, psoriasis, vitiligo, warts and herpes simplex. Sometimes skin problems can be extremely unpleasant and require both topical and internal treatment.

However, it is also important to realize that skin problems are often an expression of an internal malaise that is finding its expression on the skin. Merely treating the skin symptoms does not address the deeper problem. In fact, external treatment can often be suppressive, as once the skin symptoms disappear, different symptoms may appear on a deeper level.

This most often happens in more chronic skin conditions, such as eczema and psoriasis. They are not acute conditions that tend to go away by themselves. For example, it is quite common to see respiratory conditions such as asthma appear once the eczema disappears from external treatment.

Since the body is not being allowed to express itself on the skin, the problem has to go elsewhere. The asthma will get better again, as the skin condition becomes worse.

These observations confirm that we have to look at the functions of the body as an integrated whole, and not in a piecemeal way. What may often be concluded to have been cured may actually only be suppressed. This concept of suppression of disease is a basic part of holistic thinking, which believes that all the functions of the human body are related and always seeks to understand the underlying causes of disease.

The body always tries its best to maintain an optimal level of health; it is an intrinsic quality of all life. Often the skin is the channel by which the body tries to deal with problems, and by expressing the problem on the skin, it is protecting the important functions of the rest of the body.

Acute skin problems are somewhat different. Problems like poison ivy come from being in contact with the plant. However, even then, it seems some people are much more affected by the plant than others. Topical creams are often needed to relieve the distressing symptoms.

However, it is also possible to treat it internally with homeopathy. One of the remedies used is actually made from the plant poison ivy, called Rhus Tox, which is a good example of the law of homeopathy: "like cures like." Other remedies used are Anacardium and Croton Tiglium, both plant remedies. However, consultation with a professional homeopath may be needed if the situation is more serious.

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# Round World Music Review

**Robert Leaver**



## La CHARANGA

Cuba recently held a festival for the youth of the world, with over twelve thousand in attendance, including about one thousand Americans. I happened to be there at the same time visiting my wife. My interest in Cuba arose primarily out of my passion for Cuban music and has evolved into an intimate personal experience. As with all things Cuban, including my marriage, one cannot avoid politics, just as one cannot ignore technology here, in America.

The people I know in La Habana Vieja and Centro Habana are struggling to get by ("luchando") in the most fundamental way, and there was little that the festival offered them but a large stage outside the Hotel Nacional along Havana's famous seaside promenade, the Malecon. As if demonstrating that the youth delegates were, in reality, "tourists", their passes were worn around the neck. They were implored to wear them at all times in order to be allowed into the barricaded "invitados" section, in front of the stage.

I arrived the night that Cuba's most popular youth group, La Charanga Habanera, played live on television from this stage facing the youth of the world. Unfortunately, I arrived late and this show that created such a tremendous scandal shall have to remain a myth, one that has certainly sparked my imagination. The owner of their Spanish recording company, Francis Cabezas of Magic Music, refers to them as the "Rolling Stones" of salsa.

Accordingly, they paid five thousand dollars to rent a helicopter to fly them in like rock stars. I prefer to think of them as the "P-Funk" of Cuban music; lacking their mothership, they disembarked in their bohemian, hip-hop pirate gear from a military helicopter, which in Cuba is a most impressive way to arrive.

Cuba is certainly a sexy place — the music, the people and especially, the way the women dance — and if you want to see the new style at its wildest, La Charanga, as they are affectionately called, is the scene to see. They pack any venue they play at a cost of twenty dollars a head, far beyond what most any Cuban could afford to pay, yet there are always lots of Cuban women there with foreign men, who they generally ignore as they dance seizure-fast winding down in the most provocative manner. Needless to say, the band is doing well in Cuba and they have torn it up in Europe on extensive tours. A friend of mine saw the drummer recently, driving his new Mercedes-Benz. The past year or two, they have had numerous number one hits in Cuba that everyone seems to know by heart.

They are a truly modern band that incorporates funk and rap-like vocals in an adrenaline charged Cuban salsa format, creating a new, fresh sound, and they sing about real life in Havana today. One could say they are the new consciousness of Cuban youth, and even their name is ironic, because in the music, there is really no "charanga" (a more traditional form of Cuban music, featuring violins and flutes) but instead, a heavy rhythm section, a group of singers and several trumpets.



Back to the stage. From all accounts, it was a typical La Charanga show but a much larger audience. They played for more than two hours, dancing their choreographed scenes, which included some acrobatics, and stretching songs out to twenty minutes, as the singers improvised in the soneo and sang to the women, who take it like a drug and let loose. They sang the hit "Lola, Lola," which includes a veiled reference to smoking marijuana ("vamos a chocar la bola con Lola") and apparently, they shouted out to the audience a question that could mean, "Who smokes grass?" to an enthusiastic response.

They also made a request to remove the barricades so that Cubans could come to the front of the stage. But the incident that was singled out for punishment was when the singer, the skinny one, climbed some lighting structure on the side of the stage and gyrating sexually, removed his shirt and started to unbuckle his trousers, at which point the censors pulled the plug on the television broadcast. Apparently, he ultimately did not expose himself but nevertheless, he dared to make the gesture of lowering his trousers to the youth of the world and the Cuban populace. A fitting gesture, given that Cuba's biggest tourist attraction and biggest export these days seems to be its flesh.

For this gesture, the government has banned them from television, radio and from playing gigs in Cuba, and they cannot leave the country for six months — just as they were about to embark on a European tour.

All of Cuba is talking about this scandal. Some say they should be punished even more for their vulgar show; others say it was nothing out of the ordinary. Some say they are artists and should they be allowed to do their thing; others that they are out of control and confrontational with authorities. And still others think that the government is jealous because they are so popular and successful.

At any rate, if the government intended to stop them, they've just helped provide them with the greatest publicity they could ever ask for. They should hook up with the Rolling Stones for their upcoming tour so the world could see how amazing they are. And they'd probably convince the Stones to retire for good as they blow them off the stage.

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